
Friends of the Smith College Libraries

March 2023 News

Dear Friends,

Each February, Smith's libraries and the Friends show love for the community and the libraries with Valentine's Day-themed refreshments, crafts and games. Read on to discover how much there is to love about Smith's libraries. Josten transforms from the quietest study space on campus to a live performance venue, students curate "sweet and spicy" items from Special Collections to display under fairy lights in the Gloria Steinem Reading Room, and faculty fellows work with library staff to harness technology for better classroom learning. It may be cold and snowy in Northampton but it's always warm and welcoming in Smith's libraries!

Josten Library - Always a Favorite

Light streams into Josten's Mezzanine and Marta Almazovaite '24 welcomes visitors at the Service Desk.

Photos by Mary Irwin.

Ask any student who spends time in Josten what they love about the library, and you will hear about the coziness, the quiet study spaces, the sound-proof listening booths, and the feeling that Josten is a special place known only to devotees who often hear about it by word of mouth.

Jessica Polin '23's favorite place to study is on the Mezzanine in Josten. It's quiet there and she loves how the light streams in during the day, and how the purple carpet and red chairs make for a cheery study environment. An Education major, she lives in Wilder House but crosses the campus to study in Josten.

Josten librarian Marlene Wong knows that the Mezzanine attracts writers. She notes that many dissertations have been written there as well as published plays and books.

Marta Almazovaite '24 works at the service desk. She is a Psych major. "The staff here are very kind," she says, "and they take time to get to know the students. They also make the library very welcoming by providing tea during exams, and jigsaw puzzles, and JostenLive performances."

A sampling of new books and a view of the stacks. Photos by Mary Irwin

Some Friday afternoons, however, the quiet atmosphere shifts and the Mezzanine comes alive as a

performance space known as “Josten Live: Fridays @ Five.” Curated by Circulation Coordinator Janet Spongberg with Marlene Wong, recent events in the series have included [Professor Steve Waksman's](#) book launch for *Live Music in America: from Jenny Lind to Beyoncé*, and singer-songwriter [Shannon Lambert](#) '21 who returned to campus to perform the songs she wrote for her senior Music project during the pandemic. Next, Josten assistant Allison Wray '23 presents her senior Voice recital on March 24, choosing to perform in this more intimate performance venue - her home at Smith.

Janet Spongberg thinks of JostenLive as “an organic, grassroots, community project” that has prompted donations of an electronic grand piano, comfortable chairs, and, recently, a portable stage. Josten Library remains integral to the Performing Arts departments that surround it, supporting coursework and research in Dance, Music and Theatre.

Digital Pedagogy Fellows Share their Work

Faculty recipients of the 2022 [Digital Pedagogy Fellowship](#) presented their digital scholarship projects at a recent [Sherrerd Center Teaching Arts](#) lunch. This fellowship program partners faculty with staff in the Libraries' Learning, Research & Technology team to receive hands-on training in digital innovation spaces in Neilson Library, build their digital fluency, and engage in a community of practice with other faculty. See their [project showcase](#). The Digital Pedagogy Fellowship is funded by ITS and the Committee on Educational Technology. Additional support is provided by the Libraries.

Digital scholarship presentations, photo courtesy of Travis Grandy

ScholarWorks Spotlight

Scholarly Communications Librarian Jessica Ryan shares podcasts from Professor Susannah Howe's [Engineering Department Design Clinic](#). *“Hear Professor Howe catch up with and chat with her former students: what they worked on together and what they are up to now. It is endearing, interesting, and instills some proper Smith pride in our scholarly community!”*

[Smith ScholarWorks](#) is Smith's institutional repository of digital scholarship and research materials created and curated by faculty, students, and staff at Smith College. It is free, and easy to navigate and search by author, discipline and collection. Check it out!

Friends News

Friends Executive Committee Openings

Every year, some members of the Executive Committee complete their terms of service, and we recruit new members. We value a broad and inclusive membership that reflects the range and diversity of Smith's alumnae including by class year, racial/ethnic/gender, geographic, and professional background. The Executive Committee meets 2-3 times a year (once a year on campus) to discuss fundraising activities and outreach to raise awareness about the resources and the needs of our beloved libraries. We welcome your help in nominating candidates for the committee. Please contact [Mary](#)

[Irwin or Ann Alpers](#) if you (self nominations are fine!) or someone you'd like to nominate would like additional information.

Valentine's Day Celebrations

Once again, the Friends provided sweet treats, puzzles and Valentine-making supplies for students to enjoy.

Valentine's Day activities in Neilson, Hillyer and Josten libraries.

Photos by Mary Irwin

Friends Fellowships Awarded

The following individuals have been awarded research fellowships in Special Collections for 2023-24, funded by the Friends of the Libraries:

Priya Dixit, a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech is researching "International Imaginings of 'Radical' Women in Early 20th Century New York City."

Crystal Mun-hye Baik, a faculty member in the Department of Gender Studies & Sexuality at the University of California, Riverside, is researching "Unsanctioned Knowledge: The Lives and Labor of Korean American Feminist Activists."

Anthea Taylor, a faculty member in the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney is researching "Making a Feminist Icon: Gloria Steinem, Celebrity, and the Public Identity of American Feminism."

Oculus Society

Two years ago, the Friends created the Oculus Society to celebrate and support the inaugural years of Neilson Library. So far, our gift society has gained 166 members.

To be a part of the Oculus Society, join the Friends of the Libraries - or renew your membership - and **add a pledge for 2024** at any giving level. Join [online](#) or send a check with [this form](#). In addition to the usual benefits of membership, members receive a commemorative lapel pin to symbolize their commitment to furthering Smith's educational mission.

Special Collections

"Special Connections" in Special Collections

452 attendees showed up on Valentine's Day to view exhibits reflecting the theme of Love, Sex & Romance. According to Post-Baccalaureate Fellow Bena Williams '22 who planned the event, "Special Connections" is a fun way to interact with the collections in a completely non-academic way." The Gloria Steinem '56 Reading Room was decked out in fairy lights and paper hearts with the

“sweetest and spiciest items” from valentines, love letters and early Plath poems to 19th-century erotica and lesbian pulp fiction books. Williams added that “the best part this year was that the displays were entirely curated by our student assistants.”

Crafternoons & Open Houses

During the fall semester, Bena Williams hosted a series of outreach events to engage the campus about Special Collections. “Crafternoons” were a way to connect with current students once a month in the Campus Center with archive-themed crafts. “We wrote postcards and letters, made buttons and collages,” she said. Open houses helped introduce the community to the variety of our collections. “I picked a theme, selected items, and invited anyone who was interested to come peruse them in the Special Collections seminar room. The themes last semester ranged from Halloween to bestiaries, to Astrology.”

Vintage Valentines & students view exhibits at the "Special Connections" event in Special Collections on Valentine's Day. Photos by Mary Irwin.

Special Gifts for the Mortimer Rare Book Collection

Master bookbinder Claudia Cohen made a significant contribution to the Mortimer Rare Book Collection recently. Her gift comprised the books she has been involved in creating during her long career as well as a substantial portion of her own decorated paper collection. The art and craft of Cohen's work across her career will now be available to researchers who will also appreciate her collaborations with artists and writers including Sarah Plimpton, Richard Tuttle, and Barbara Hodgson.

Jane Fogg '54 has donated James Cook, *A Voyage Towards the South Pole, and Round the World...* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1777) and George Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands...* (London: Capt. Wilson, 1788). Both are important illustrated works of colonial explorations. The Keate text is partially responsible for establishing the concept of the "noble savage." The Cook work documented European encounters with many lands and cultures and conveyed the impressions of the explorers to a broad population in England.

Alice Holland Webster '54 has donated John James Audubon, *The Birds of America* (New York: George R. Lockwood, c.1870), the final octavo [smaller format] edition in 8 volumes with lithographic prints by J. T. Bowen. These octavo editions were meant to make the work more widely available and were significantly more affordable than the massive folio edition.

Current Exhibits

Neilson Exhibition Gallery. Jim Gipe-Henry Amistadi photos/Pivot Media

"Neilson Library: An Evolution"

This stunning inaugural exhibit tells the story of the library from 1909 to today.
Neilson Library 2nd Floor Exhibition Gallery.

"Watch out for Alison Bechdel"

Materials drawn from the Alison Bechdel Collection in Special Collections relate to her life, work, creative process as well as her involvement with local and queer communities.

Neilson Library 3rd Floor through May.

"Zines & Artists Books"

Hillyer Art Library, through July.

Artists books on display in Hillyer Art Library. Photos by Mary Irwin

Thank You for your Support

Thank you for your support of Smith's libraries and the Friends. If you are interested in deepening your connection to teaching and learning on campus and to the heart of Smith, please consider putting your name forward for the Friends of Smith Libraries Executive Committee. We appreciate your attention and affection for Neilson, Hillyer and Josten and the many ways in which they nurture scholarship and community at Smith.

I encourage all spring donors to [renew your support](#) for the Friends and the Libraries today. We welcome new members, and we encourage you to share the work that we do with your classmates who may be interested in supporting Smith's libraries.

Thank you for being a Friend!

Sincerely,

Ann Alpers '84

Chair, Executive Committee

Friends of the Smith College Libraries

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